

Leaking barrels of toxic waste seized at plant

By CHANCE CONNER

Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

Environmental Protection Agency officials Thursday seized hundreds of leaking barrels of toxic and flammable wastes that had been illegally stored at a north Denver manufacturing company several hundred feet from the Platte River.

Officials said preliminary tests of the leaking barrels indicated they contained ketone, lead and chromium, all of which are considered hazardous wastes.

The barrels were discovered at the Frankel Manufacturing Co., at 5125 Race Court. The company's president, Gene Weisberg, was reportedly out of town, and an employee who answered the telephone said no other company officials would comment.

Ketone is a highly ignitable chemical, while lead and chromium are extremely toxic heavy metals, Assistant U.S. Attorney Doug Curless said.

EPA agents wearing protective gear spent most of Thursday extracting samples from nearly all barrels at the company. The samples will be forwarded to government laboratories for further testing. Plans to remove the barrels had not been made by late Thursday.

Authorities said the company manufactures ink, typewriter ribbons, dyes and other materials.

EPA regulations require companies to obtain permits before storing, transporting or disposing of hazardous wastes. Frankel Manufacturing had no such permits, according to an affidavit accompanying an EPA search warrant of the site.

The barrels were stacked three-high in a fenced-in area outside the Frankel plant.

EPA officials discovered the leaking drums last week after two agents drove by, noticed them stacked in the yard and examined them. The agents also noticed that vegetation around the leaking barrels had been killed, according to the affidavit.

EPA officials then went to the U.S. attorney's office and obtained a search war-



GEORGE KOCHANIEC JR./Rocky Mountain News

An unidentified inspector for the Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday gathered samples of hazardous waste from barrels at Frankel Manufacturing Co.

rant for the grounds. Curless said that Thursday's inclement weather helped reduce the chance of an explosion while the ketone-filled drums were removed.

Government prosecutors could file either criminal or civil complaints against the company, Curless said.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

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illustrating new trash collection days incorrectly labeled Sheridan Boulevard as Federal Boulevard.

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